

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A porous starch-based pigment or filler product, ~~characterized in that~~ characterized in that ~~[[it]]~~ comprises a stable foam, which contains foam bubbles, the average size of which is less than approximately 10 micrometres.

2. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a product according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ which comprises

- a) dissolving air, or other gases, at a low temperature, possibly at overpressure, ~~is dissolved~~ into a water gel of starch, after which the raising of the temperature generates a ~~gas/liquid~~ gas or liquid phase separation, ~~[[i.e.]]~~ wherein bubbles are formed, and the product is crosslinked to achieve a stable foam, or
- b) mixing air ~~is mixed~~ into the starch gel to foam the gel and the foamed gel is cooled rapidly to stabilize the foam, or
- c) forming a micro bubble emulsion ~~is formed~~ of the aqueous solutions of the starches and the organic solvents under thorough mixing and in the presence of surface-active agents and crosslinking reagents, or
- d) contacting a solid starch derivative ~~is contacted~~ with high-pressure carbon dioxide in conditions where the high-pressure carbon dioxide penetrates into the starch derivative, which swells because of the effect of the carbon dioxide, after which the pressure on the starch derivative, which was swelled in the carbon dioxide, is lowered rapidly thereby producing a porous material following decompression.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 2, ~~e-h-a-r-a-e-t-e-r-i-z-e-d i-n t-h-a-t~~ wherein in alternative [[c]] c) above, the starch derivative is dissolved into water to a solution, the percentage of which is approximately 1-30 % by weight, ~~preferably approximately 5-20 % per weight, most suitably approximately 10-15 % per weight.~~

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 3, ~~e-h-a-r-a-e-t-e-r-i-z-e-d i-n~~ that, wherein in order to increase the stability, 0.01-10 % per weight, ~~preferably approximately 0.1-5 % per weight~~ of a crosslinking agent, ~~such as glyoxal,~~ is added into the starch-bearing solution.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 2, ~~e-h-a-r-a-e-t-e-r-i-z-e-d i-n t-h-a-t~~ wherein in alternative [[d,]] d), a solid starch ester or starch ether, with a degree of substitution in the range of 0.5-3.0 mol/mol, ~~preferably at least 1.0,~~ is contacted with a material which comprises mainly carbon dioxide at an elevated pressure and temperature, after which the pressure of the material ~~which was~~ contacting the cellulose ester or cellulose ether and which comprises mainly carbon dioxide is reduced rapidly so that a microporous starch ester or starch ether is achieved after the reduction of the pressure.

6. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 5, ~~e-h-a-r-a-e-t-e-r-i-z-e-d i-n t-h-a-t~~ wherein a starch ester or a starch ether is contacted with a material which comprises mainly carbon dioxide at a pressure of 100-310 bar and at a temperature of 50-100 ° C.

7. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 5 ~~or 6, characterized in~~ that wherein a starch ester or a starch ether is contacted with carbon dioxide to which a small molecular alcohol or ester has been added.

8. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the carbon dioxide comprises 1-15 % per weight of a small molecular alcohol or ester.

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the pressure on the material contacting the starch ester or the starch ether and which comprises mainly carbon dioxide is reduced to an essentially lower pressure within 0.08-7 seconds.

10. (Currently Amended) A product or a method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the starch-based material comprises a starch ether, especially hydroxyalkyl starch, or starch ester, ~~such as starch alkenyl succinate.~~

11. (Currently Amended) A product or a method according to Claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein in order to modify the properties of the starch ~~gels/starch~~ gels or starch foams, an initial material is used which comprises hydroxyalkyl starch or starch alkenyl succinate.

Claim 12 (Cancelled)